

Air Strikes in South Continue But Are Expected to Taper Off

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Thursday, Jan. 25 (AP) — United States and South Vietnamese planes reportedly continued their normal war operations throughout South Vietnam yesterday.

But United States sources indicated that the American bombing campaign would begin tapering off some time today in advance of the cease-fire that is due to go into effect at 8 A.M. Sunday Saigon time (7 P.M. Saturday, New York time).

The sources said that some strikes would probably be flown until just before the truce deadline. Priority during the period, the sources added, would most likely go to attacks in direct support of South Vietnamese troops in trouble.

Advisers to Pull Out

In the 24 hours ended at 8 A.M. yesterday, the United States command said, American fighter-bombers flew 348 strikes throughout South Vietnam. Twenty-nine B-52 missions, each presumably consisting of three planes, were also reported, with targets including Communist-held areas west of Quang Tri city.

The sources said that American military advisers in the field with South Vietnamese units and assigned to provincial and district teams would probably begin pulling out soon.

United States advisers are still present with South Vietnamese paratroop battalions operating in the northernmost province of Quang Tri, where there has been recent heavy fighting. In most other areas advisers operate below division level only as the need arises.

Maj. Jere K. Forbus, a command spokesman, turned aside questions at the regular news briefing yesterday about stand-down orders for Americans.

"There has been no significant change in U. S. air operations and the U. S. command is continuing to function," he said.

South Vietnamese officials said that Government forces were also continuing operations to "protect the population and protect the territory of the country." They will have a similar mission after the truce goes into effect, according to the senior Saigon command spokesman, Lieut. Col. Le

Teung Hien.

Killings reported

Reporting on ground action, the Saigon command said there were 95 Communist attacks in the 24 hours ended at dawn yesterday, the greatest number in two and a half weeks.

The command said 147 North Vietnamese had been killed in

the fighting, with South Vietnamese losses put at 11 killed and 37 wounded. One civilian was reported killed during the fighting and 25 were said to have been wounded.

Allied sources said the North Vietnamese First Division in southern Cambodia was trying to cross into the western region of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam, where it operated before 1970. The sources said the move was part of a drive to gain territory in South Vietnam before the cease-fire.

Cambodian Troops Attacked

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Jan. 24 (UPI) — Government troops that were reported trying to enlarge Phnom Penh's defense perimeter were attacked by Communist forces today only 16 miles south of the capital along Route 2.

Before the attack, the Cambodian command had reported the highway clear as far as Chambek, 20 miles south of Phnom Penh.